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C O N F I D E N T I A L DHAKA 002300

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: SA A/S ROCCA'S MEETING WITH HOME MINISTER

Classified By: P/E Counselor D.C. McCullough, reasons para 1.4 b, d.

1. (C) Summary: A/S Rocca's discussion with the Minister of Home Affairs emphasized that internal security issues in Bangladesh are clearly on Washington's radar and have raised concerns about the country's stability. She suggested security issues would be a factor in determining the level of U.S. assistance in training and technology. End Summary.

2. (SBU) On May 12, Assistant Secretary for South Asia Christina Rocca, Ambassador, and RLA (notetaker) met for 40 minutes with the Minister of Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar.

3. (C) A/S Rocca stated that the USG appreciated the good cooperation between the BDG and the FBI on the Kibria murder investigation, which has attracted attention in Washington because of reports of a whitewash investigation and of the destabilizing effects of political violence. Therefore, it was important for BDG that its investigation and judicial process stand up to international scrutiny.

4. (C) Babar promised full transparency and that the case would be referred to a speedy trial tribunal. He stated that the BDG would uphold the rule of law, even if the investigation led to a member of the ruling party. The investigation has revealed that unusually large amounts of money were found in seven bank accounts of the key defendant, a ruling party local official, suggesting strong links to Rangs, a major Bangladeshi trading company. Babar stated that he secured a judge's order to obtain the underlying bank documents and these documents would be made available to the USG along with any other information the USG requested.

5. (C) A/S Rocca and Ambassador warned that an apparent upswing in extra-judicial killings by members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and other police units could invoke Leahy amendment sanctions leading to Congressional investigations that would present significant bilateral complications for the BDG. The Minister stated that the day before a MHA committee finalized a proposal to investigate and prosecute alleged RAB misconduct, which calls for stricter procedures and more severe punishment than under current civilian or military tribunals. RAB was also discussed in the context of USG technical assistance. When Babar expressed BDG interest in USG Coast Guard cutters and helicopters for border protection, A/S Rocca stated that the BDG's actions on curbing the extra-judicial killings will be "one of the first things we look at" when determining USG's assistance.

6. (C) Other topics included:

-- Bangla Bai: The BDG is committed to arresting Bangla Bai but does not know where he is. Babar cited media reports that he has fled the country. A/S Rocca emphasized that his arrest would be a strong signal that BDG is serious about fighting extremism and terrorism.

-- Ahmadiyas: Babar addressed USG concerns about the protection of this minority, vowing that the BDG was "doing its homework seriously" with local police to prevent conflicts and uphold constitutional protections to minorities. A/S Rocca emphasized that religious freedom is important to the U.S.

-- Trafficking in Persons: Investigations and prosecutions continue, and every police station in every district has a dedicated TIP team. The crackdown has led to a downturn in trafficking cases.

-- Border Tensions with India: Babar complained that India falsely claimed that insurgents took refuge in Bangladesh but provided no intelligence as to their whereabouts. Moreover, he claimed that the GOI was harboring criminals from Bangladesh in Calcutta.

7. (U) A/S Rocca cleared this message.  
THOMAS